



International Carriage Drivers Association

MEMORANDUM

To: Manuel Bandeira de Mello, Director of Driving FEI
Joaquín Medina Garcia, Chairman Driving Committee FEI
Copy: Committee ICDA
From: Marie de Ronde-Oudemans, Secretary General ICDA
Date: December 9, 2024

**Re: Measurement of carriage track widths – clarification
Letter FEI, November 27, 2024**

Dear Manu,

Thank you very much for your swift reply of November 27, 2024. We do realize that the request for postponing implementation of Appendix 11, which is not a new rule but just a clarification, is late. From now on ICDA will be included in all correspondence as stakeholder to start with, so we are convinced that these kind of requests will be sent in time.

Having that said, your reply received November 27, 2024 was based on Appendix 12, while we requested postponing or even better maintaining the existing technique measuring the carriage track width (Appendix 11, enforced January 1, 2025).

We like to clarify our request with another important remark which we thought was clear: with the new way of measuring the majority of the carriages will not meet the requirements (minimum track width), therefore adjustments will be expensive and not possible to execute before January 1, 2025. A number of NFs and carriage manufacturers besides Van den Heuvel are preparing response, coordinated by ICDA.

As mentioned earlier, the new measurement technique entails more cost athletes (the rubber needs to be replaced or the axles need to be widened to meet the minimum width). For American drivers whose carriages are manufactured in Europe it will be even more expensive to have their carriage wheels altered – timewise it cannot be done before January 1, 2025 as the driving season in Florida is in full swing.

We hope that a solution will be found to address this matter.

Best regards.

Marie de Ronde-Oudemans
On behalf of Committee ICDA

Attachments:

- Letter Bennington Carriages
- Letter Lehel Carriages
- Letter ECC European Class Carriages
- Letter Van den Heuvel & Zn



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Fédération Équestre Internationale
HM King Hussein I Building
Chemin de la Joliette 8
1006 Lausanne
Switzerland

8th December 2024

Dear Sir, Madam,

This letter is regarding the impact of the change in FEI driving rules related to measurement of carriage track width (Appendix 11).

In short, these changes would force us to design a new tyre material for installation in roughly 1,500 carriages in Europe and over 500 carriages in the United States and Canada, affecting thousands of customers and jeopardising their ability to continue competing in the sport.

These changes also affect Bennington Carriages' ability to both continue manufacturing carriages and supporting a sport that we have been involved with for 65 years.

We have reached out to our rubber supplier in Liverpool about designing a new profile for the carriage tyres. They explained that the first step would be creating a new dye for the tyre material, which would take a minimum of 8 months and cost over £30,000 GBP. Then, the new profile would require in-house testing for a minimum of 12 months before installation on customers' carriages could be considered.

In addition, for each customer, the process of replacing the rubber on existing carriage tyres would cost over £2,000 GBP per vehicle excluding VAT. That price is the minimum cost: additional services related to tyre rubber replacement, such as powder coating, coach lining, and other modifications, would cost an additional £2,000 GBP per vehicle, bringing the total cost to £4,000 GBP.

As noted above, over 2,000 carriages and their owners would be negatively impacted by these significant costs. Future customers would also be negatively impacted by increased prices for carriages and longer leads times for delivery (lengthening build time from 3 months to at least 12 months, if not longer). This is not a sustainable business model for Bennington Carriages nor our customers.

We understand that courses have become more technical, and we are proud that our carriages have risen to the challenge, allowing our customers to successfully compete. However, many competitors are already facing financial constraints resulting from global cost of living increases. Adding additional expenses to what is already an expensive sport means that we risk making it inaccessible to competitors—both long-time and new—and also the businesses that make this sport possible.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns. We hope this letter provides insight into the unintended consequences of this change in FEI driving rules related to measurement of carriage track width (Appendix 11).

Kind regards,

Sue Mart

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Bennington Carriages
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Aaron Soldavin

North American Representative
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LEHEL

COACHBUILDERS, CARRIAGE BUILDERS AND SPORTING MOTORHOMES

Subject, FEI Rules Annex 11

To whom it may concern.
Budapest 2024,12,07

Dear Sir Madam

Due to the constantly changing demands in competition driving specifically cones and marathon, to stay competitive and safe, athletes together with manufacturers are constantly working on solutions, to cope with the often-unforgiving surfaces, undulating terrain, deep mud, holding sand arenas, extreme slippery surfaces, high speeds and tight turns.

One of the solutions to increase grip is to create wheel profiles that stop the carriage drifting, which is the main physical cause of turn overs, and stay on track. Pneumatic wheels are not permitted so different longitudinal grooves have been tested then applied on wheels, to increase the wheel surface in these circumstances. The result is that today, 90% of the carriages have these safer wheel treads and they do not gain any advantage in the width of the vehicles but will certainly not meet these new regulations.

The impact of modification to the many carriages currently used in the sport is:

1. Extremely expensive. The process must include, removal of the wheels, delivering it to the handful of manufacturers, mainly in Poland, Holland, France and Hungary, removing the rubber, reinstalling the new rubber, repainting the wheels, as due to the heat applied the paint will be damaged heavily returning to the owner and expert refit of the wheels breaks etc. The estimate for a custom set of wheels is 2000 euro, if e.g. Kuhnle wheels, which no longer have service must be also done, this cost can increase or even double. The cost does not include delivery costs, which is well over a 1000 euro from Europe, and many 1000s of euros for other continents. This is a multi-million-euro cost over all in the community.
2. Extremely time consuming. If all manufacturers stop making carriages, and only work on this project, it will take a minimum of two years to do all carriages on the world.

Therefore, despite our financial interest, we strongly disagree with this regulation, we find it impossible to do, and we believe that all Bennington, Atel, Lehel, Dominiak, Glinkwosky, ECC, Werdonshot and other carriages will be unusable from 2025, making combined driving an impossible challenge for EVERYONE.

Thank you, best regards:

Maciej Majewsky, Jambor Noemi
Lehel FOC, Lehel Group
Manufacturer of Lehel FOC carriages

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EUROPEAN CLASS CARRIAGES



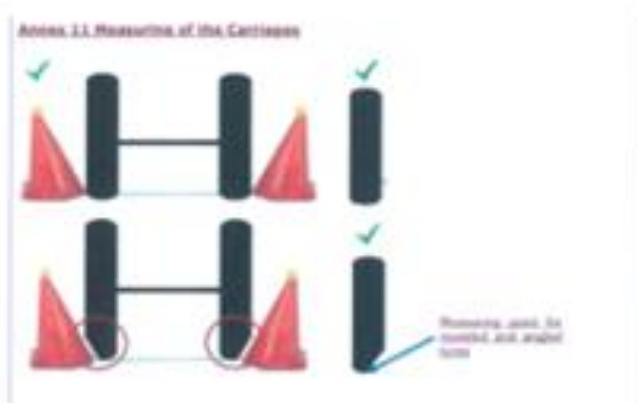
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Chemin de la Joliette 8
1006 Lausanne

Dear Sirs,

We are writing this letter in connection with the implementation of changes in the regulations regarding the applicable profile of vulcanized rubber on wheels used in carriages dedicated to sled sports, i.e. annex 11



As a long-standing manufacturer specializing in the production of carriages dedicated for driving competition, we are proud that many of the world's top riders and champions choose our vehicles for their safety-free and reliable equipment. For this reason, we wanted to take a stand on this issue.

Our many years of experience and the many performance tests we have conducted over the years allow us to state with certainty that, the use of smooth outer grooves on the circumference of the rubber tire, positively affects the stability of the vehicle during cornering in the driving skills competition as well as in the field trial, and thus provides much greater safety for riders and grooms, which for us as a manufacturer is a priority.

What we do not understand is the principle of measuring the footprint that a vehicle leaves on a concrete surface. We would like to mention that harness competitions always take place on soft, grass or sand surfaces, not on a hard concrete or asphalt surface.

EUROPEAN CLASS CARRIAGES



For this reason, we would like to point out that the outer groove of about 15 to 25 mm in height on the circumference of the wheel, does not affect what kind of footprint the vehicle leaves.

The soft ground, the weight of the vehicle and the pressure that the vehicle exerts on the ground, causes the trace that the carriage leaves to align across the width of the tire surface to the outer dimension of the rubber, which should not disqualify such a vehicle from the competition.

In our opinion, with the safety of the competitors first and foremost in mind, it is not necessary to disqualify such a vehicle from the competition.

Your faithfully,
CEO M.Sc. Eng. Krzysztof Szczepaniak

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Krzysztof Szczepaniak', is written over the typed name.

CHR. van den Heuvel & Zonen B.V.

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Fédération Equestre Internationale

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Switzerland

26 November 2024

Dear Sir, Madam,

We're writing this letter on behalf of the new rule about the rubber profile on the carriage wheels.

We like to inform you on the impacts of the new rule.

We are very proud that we have drivers, clients around the world driving and performing on the highest levels of all FEI competitions with carriages from our manufactory

With the new rule all carriages with profile on the rubber wheels need to get all new rubber vulcanised on the wheels, with this change all the drivers are forced to all the extra costs. When we have to change the rubber on the wheels all wheels need to be repainted and need to get new lining because the paint will burn from the vulcanising of the new rubber on the wheels.

The costs to make the new rubber on the wheels and repaint the wheels and new lining will cost around € 3.500,- excl VAT. each carriage

With this new rule all the drivers are getting forced to the extra costs of this intervention.

Our opinion of this new rule is that this is not thought about it, in the years the courses are changed to really fast speedy courses. We have applied the profile on the carriage wheels to get a better grip and a safer drive (without the profile the carriages are sliding out in the turns and speedy courses). So in our opinion this new rule is bringing down the safety of the sport which is really important in these days.

What we have heard is that the carriages will be measured on the smallest point on the hard concrete surface, the carriages are driving in sand or grass arena's when the carriages are on that surface the profile is in the ground and the wide flat spot is level with the flooring of the arena.

Another side note is that we have a delivery time of a year for our new carriages and we have a lot of work, when we have to change all carriages made by us around the whole world that are competing on FEI competitions (approx 400 carriages) it will take already more that 1 year to get this changed to the new rule expectations.

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We hope by this letter that we gave you a good overview about all the extra costs and unsafety that this will bring in the driving sport, which is already getting more attackable by the days.

Yours faithfully,

Sjors van den Heuvel,

CHR. Van Den Heuvel & Zn. BV